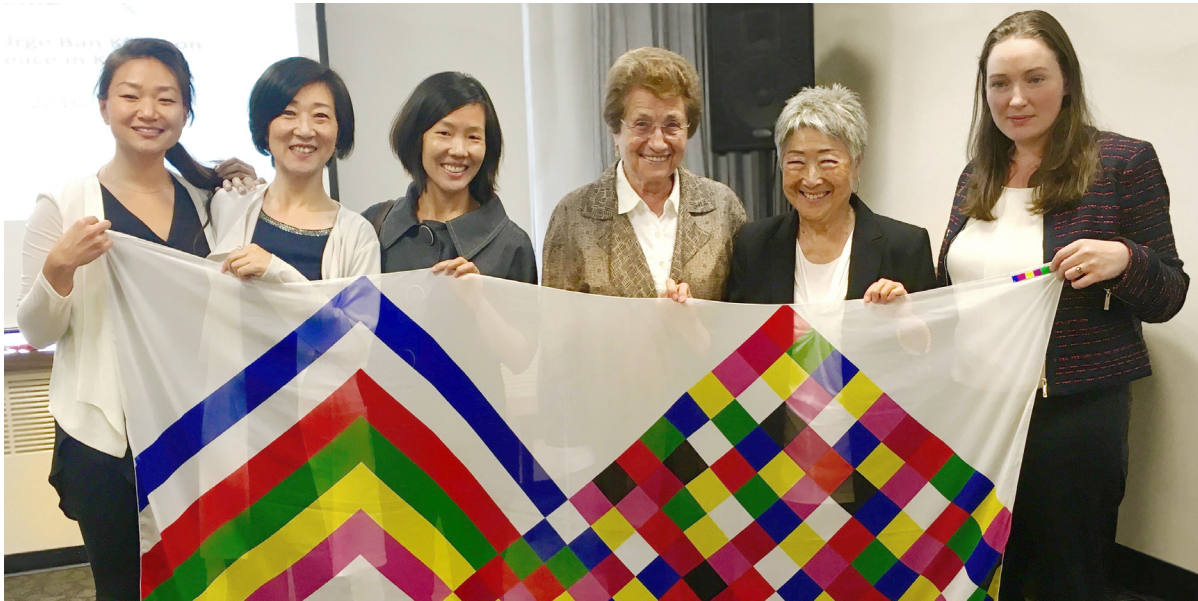




WOMENCROSSDMZ

2016 Annual Report



Left to Right: Jacquelyn Wells, Kozue Akibayashi, Suzy Kim, Cora Weiss, Aiyoung Choi, and Maria Butler at Sept. 27, 2016 press conference

Women Cross DMZ appeals to UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon to initiate peace treaty for Korea

On September 26, 2016 Women Cross DMZ presented an open letter to United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon urging him to initiate a formal process for a peace treaty in Korea. Women leaders from 38 countries signed the letter as did 37 South Korean women's organizations representing thousands of Korean women. Among the signatories are Nobel Peace Laureates, parliamentarians, academics, writers, artists and activists.

With the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), we hosted a press conference on September 27 at the UN Church Center in New York City. Moderated by WILPF's Maria Butler, speakers included Cora Weiss, President of Hague Appeal for Peace, Kozue Akibayashi, President of WILPF, and Suzy Kim, Professor of Korean History at Rutgers University.

They focused their remarks on the opportunity Mr. Ban has to exercise his leadership in the last 100 days as UN Secretary-General to defuse dangerous tensions on the Korean peninsula. In addition to press in the room, other journalists joined the press conference via Periscope live video streaming, which helped our letter get wide media coverage around the world.

Sample Media Coverage of Our Letter

"Women Petition UN Leader to Seek Korean Peace Treaty" *The New York Times*, Sept. 27, 2016

"Women Leaders Urge UN Chief to Press for Korea Peace Treaty" *Associated Press*, Sept. 27, 2016

"Women Urge UN Chief to Push for a Permanent Korean Peace Treaty" *Time Magazine*, Sept. 27, 2016

"Women Cross DMZ urge Ban Ki-moon to end Korean War before his term ends" *The Hankyoreh*, Sept. 28, 2016

"Women activists call on UN chief to help formally end Korean War" *South China Morning Post*, Sept. 28, 2016

"Over a hundred prominent women petition UN's Ban for treaty to end Korean War" *Deutsche Welle*, Sept. 28, 2016

"Women petition UN chief to pursue Korea peace treaty" *Bangkok Post*, Sept. 28, 2016

"Women Peacemakers Say It's Time to End America's Permanent State of War with North Korea," *Alternet*, Sept. 29, 2016



2015 Delegation/Steering Committee

Christine Ahn, International Coordinator
Kozue Akibayashi, Women's Int'l League for Peace and Freedom
Aiyoung Choi, Nonprofit Management Consultant
Ewa Eriksson-Fortier, Humanitarian Aid Worker
Meri Joyce, Peace Boat, Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC)
Northeast Asia Regional Coordinator
Suzy Kim, Rutgers University
Gwyn Kirk, Women for Genuine Security
M. Brinton Lykes, Boston College
Hye-Jung Park, Media Activist
Ann Wright, Retired US Army Colonel, Diplomat

2015 Delegation Members

Janis Alton, Canadian Voice of Women for Peace
Medea Benjamin, Code Pink
Deann Borshay Liem, Filmmaker
Hyun-Kyung Chung, Union Theological Seminary
Jean Chung, Action for One Korea
Gay Dillingham, Filmmaker
Abigail Disney, Filmmaker and Philanthropist
Jodie Evans, Code Pink
Leymah Gbowee, 2011 Nobel Peace Laureate
Erika Guevara Rosas, Amnesty International
Patricia Guerrero, Liga de Mujeres Desplazadas
Jane Jin Kaisen, Artist and Filmmaker
Vana Kim Hansen, Spiritual Teacher
Liza Maza, Gabriela Women's Alliance
Mairead Maguire, 1976 Nobel Peace Laureate
Netsai Mushonga, Women's Coalition of Zimbabwe
Lisa Natividad, Guahan Coal. For Peace & Justice
Ann Patterson, Peace People, Northern Ireland
Gloria Steinem, Author and Activist
Suzuyo Takazato, Okinawa Women Act Against Military Violence

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Eve Ensler, Playwright and Founder of V-Day
Isabelle Geukens, Women Peacemaker Program
Peter Hayes, Nautilus Institute
Victor Hsu, Presbyterian Church, Taiwan
Eleana Kim, University of California, Irvine
Nam-Hee Lee, University of California, Los Angeles
Sung-ok Lee, United Methodist Women
Bill Richardson, Former Governor and US Ambassador to UN
Alice Walker, Author and Activist
Cora Weiss, Hague Appeal for Peace
Marilyn Young, New York University

Volunteers

Margaret Gerhart, University of Pennsylvania
Heng Liu, Wellesley College
Becky Shin, Scripps College
Jacquelyn Wells, Designer and Business Owner

Letter from International Coordinator

Dear Friends:

I have just returned from Siem Reap, Cambodia where I met with a diverse group from the United States, South Korea, Europe, and throughout Asia, including several representatives from the United Nations. Although we held divergent views on how to resolve the Korean conflict, we shared a commitment to engaging North Korea.

Participants congratulated WCDMZ for the successful DMZ crossing in 2015 and our recent campaign to UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon to initiate a formal peace process for Korea. They praised our efforts to push the boundaries of what is considered possible.

In the 18 months since our dramatic DMZ crossing, we have widely spread our message for a Korea Peace Treaty and women's leadership in the peace process. We have amplified our message on major global stages, including at the UN, in the halls of U.S. Congress, and at the Nobel Peace Summit, as well as in the headlines of every major news media. We've spoken to thousands of people on college campuses, churches, synagogues, community centers, bookstores and private living rooms in over 30 major cities around the world. We *are* raising awareness on the urgent need for peace, and with your help, we will continue to broadcast our message even stronger and farther.

In February this year WCDMZ held working meetings in Bali, Indonesia with North and South Korean women. In March, we organized several events during the UN Commission on the Status of Women, including a standing room only session on "Women's Leadership in the Korea Peace Process." In May, six of our delegation joined over 1,000 Korean women, men and children to walk along the southern border of the DMZ on the anniversary of our 2015 crossing. In June, with the newly formed Korea Peace Network, we helped organize a conference at George Washington University, "Engaging North Korea: U.S. Policies to Improve Bilateral Relations." And in September, our Steering Committee met in Southold, New York to plan our next chapter to further grow our reach and impact, which you will read more about in this Annual Report.

All of this was accomplished with one staff, a shoestring budget, and thousands of hours by a team of dedicated volunteers -- including many of you! We are deeply thankful for all the women and men who give their precious time, expertise and labor of love. We are a movement of women mobilizing globally for peace in Korea, and with your ongoing support, we will continue to chip away at the longest U.S. war to help realize peace on the Korean Peninsula.

With gratitude and in peace,

Christine Ahn
International Coordinator



Building A Sustainable and Effective Organization:

2017 and Beyond

On September 8-10, 2016, WCDMZ’s Steering Committee held a strategic planning retreat in Southold, New York to outline our next steps. With the help of Helen Kim, an organizational development and movement-building consultant, we clarified our mission, agreed on core strategies, identified priorities, established decision-making structures and processes, and renewed our commitment to building WCDMZ to achieve our goals.

Our mission is to mobilize women globally for peace in Korea. We seek to do this by:

1. Raising global awareness about the urgent need for peace in Korea;
2. Expanding and deepening relationships among women leaders and organizations in North and South Korea and globally;
3. Promoting women’s leadership in peace-building processes on the Korean peninsula and region;
4. Building our organizational capacity and partnerships for greater impact and sustainability.

WCDMZ Action Plan for 2017

- Organize educational events at the UN, U.S. Congress, colleges, universities, churches, synagogues, and other centers of influence.
- Conduct educational webinars on critical issues impacting peace on the Korea peninsula and women’s peace building.
- Grow our community for greater impact and sustainability, including creating a roster of women experts who can write and speak on these issues in the media.
- Organize a daylong conference on Gender and Peacebuilding with the Global Affairs Institute at Rutgers University, New Jersey.
- Convene a Northeast Asia Women’s Peace and Security Working Group and Roundtable with key national, regional and international organizations to help formulate policy recommendations to resolve Korean conflict.
- Continue to work with the Korea Peace Network and bring together diverse groups for a National Day of Advocacy in Washington, D.C. to promote U.S. policies to normalize US-DPRK relations.
- Increase the number of WCDMZ volunteers and activists.



Suzy Kim and Brinton Lykes working hard at the retreat

“ WCDMZ is bringing together such a splendid group of smart, engaged, feminist women for action. They are weaving a transnational network of women leaders to speak together. And they are turning a seeming “non-issue” (normalcy) into an issue: making the continued militarized division of Korea not only problematic, but a subject of urgency. ”

- Cynthia Enloe, Professor, Clark University



CONTINUING OUR JOURNEY:

International Women's Korea Peace Convening, Bali, Indonesia

February 7-14, 2016

Following our DMZ crossing, WCDMZ sought to bring together North and South Korean women to deepen relationships and develop shared strategies for achieving peace on the Korean peninsula. This strategy was thwarted in January 2016 when North Korea's nuclear test prompted the South Korean government to ban North-South civilian exchanges.

We creatively regrouped, organizing two back-to-back gatherings with each Korean delegation. Eight WCDMZ members met with six North Korean and four South Korean women in Bali, Indonesia, a neutral third-party country with diplomatic relations to both Koreas. These meetings facilitated our developing shared and particular understandings and contributed to shaping our next steps.



WCDMZ delegation with North Korean women (left) and South Korean women (right)

One specific action agreed to by both North and South Korean women and WCDMZ was a global petition for the resolution of the Korean War with a peace treaty, which became our letter to Ban Ki-Moon.

We agreed on a joint report with the North Korean delegation in which we confirmed that:

“We will work toward the achievement of lasting peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula. This includes the removal of various political and physical hindrances to peace and reunification, replacement of the Armistice Agreement with a peace treaty, and the eventual denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula and the entire world. We will promote women's leadership at all levels of peacebuilding, including preventing armed conflict and participating in peace negotiations.”

<https://www.womencrossdmz.org/bali-peace-summit/>



WCDMZ and North Korean delegations on a community-building outing



WCDMZ PEACE BUILDING ACTIVITIES

UN Commission on Status of Women (CSW), New York

March 22-25, 2016

In March, we organized a series of public education events during the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) conference at the UN. As with the meeting in Bali, we sought to bring North and South Korean women together to speak on a panel on women's leadership in the Korea peace process at the UN. We had secured UN funding for travel for two North Korean women (and Pyongyang's approval), but they were ultimately unable to join us due to worsening international tensions.

WCDMZ held a very productive daylong strategy meeting with the South Korean women's delegation, and organized two public events: a standing-room only panel at the UN Church Center, and an uplifting celebration of our DMZ crossing organized by Aiyoun Choi with talks by Gloria Steinem and Leymah Gbowee, a film clip by Deann Borshay Liem, and performances by spoken word artist Kelly Tsai and traditional Korean dancer Song-Hee Lee.



Aiyoun Choi, Leymah Gbowee



Christine Ahn, Gloria Steinem

South Korean Women Walk and Meet for Peace, Seoul/Imjingak

May 24-28, 2016

On the first anniversary of our DMZ crossing, a South Korean women's coalition of over 30 major women's and peace groups organized a women's peace walk and symposium. On May 28, six WCDMZ delegates joined over 1,000 Korean women, men and children in Imjingak for a six-kilometer walk along the South Korean border of the DMZ. Participants engraved in stone their commitment to continue to walk for peace until they could freely walk across the ecological park that will one day replace the DMZ. As Vana Kim wrote to us from Korea, "The future is here, and we are the future."

The May 24 peace symposium in Seoul gathered over 150 women activists, academics, elected officials, faith leaders and students. Panelists discussed opportunities and challenges of women's peacebuilding, including the limitations of UNSCR 1325, militarism's impact on everyday life, and the multiple challenges in building a nuclear-free world. In the weeks leading up to these events, detractors in South Korea rebaited WCDMZ and the organizers in an attempt to force the coalition to cancel these events, but the strength of the South Korean women's groups – and their resilience despite the hostile political climate – prevailed.



Building Partnerships and Raising Awareness for Peace in Korea

Advocating for Engagement with North Korea, Washington, D.C.

June 23-25, 2016

In October 2015, WCDMZ joined others to create the Korea Peace Network (KPN), a new U.S. alliance working for peace and reconciliation on the Korean peninsula. Co-anchored by WCDMZ and the American Friends Service Committee, KPN hosted a daylong conference with the Partnerships for International Strategies in Asia at the Elliot School of International Affairs at George Washington University.

The conference, “Engaging North Korea: U.S. Policies to Improve Relations with the DPRK,” featured a keynote speech by former UN Ambassador and Governor Bill Richardson and expert panelists who discussed policies to de-escalate tensions on the Korean peninsula and foster people-to-people exchanges. We ended the conference with a screening of the latest documentary film by Daisil Kim-Gibson, *People Are the Sky*, which provides a candid and personal look into North Korea and its people.

The conference afforded exchanges among policy analysts, government officials, academics and practitioners across the foreign policy spectrum. Following the conference, KPN members discussed the need for greater engagement with the DPRK with Members of Congress and their staffers, including Representative John Conyers (D-MI), one of the two remaining veterans of the Korean War in Congress.



Christine Ahn speaks with U.S. Congressman & Korean War veteran John Conyers (D-MI)



Top left: Bill Richardson; Top Right: De-Mining Panelists, Eleana Kim, Megan Burke, Channapha Khamvongsa; Bottom: People-to-People Engagement panel

The New York Times

On September 16, *The New York Times* published a response by Christine Ahn and Aiyoung Choi to Joel S. Wit’s op-ed, “How to Stop North Korea,” in which he calls for a new U.S. diplomatic initiative to halt North Korea’s nuclear program.

To the Editor:

While Joel S. Wit makes a persuasive case for why the next American president should engage North Korea, we believe that time is of the essence. The sole language now spoken is one of war: Pyongyang conducts nuclear tests; Washington flies B-1 bombers; and Seoul reportedly threatens surgical strikes. President Obama should signal his willingness now to engage in diplomacy before a dangerous miscalculation triggers an all-out war.

We agree with Mr. Wit that a longer-term solution would be to replace the Armistice Agreement with a peace treaty. Military leaders from the United States, North Korea and China,

however, promised this on July 27, 1953, when they signed the cease-fire and agreed to reconvene in three months to sign a peace accord. Sixty-three years is a long time to deliver on such a commitment.

As evidenced by the reopening of relations with Cuba, the Iran deal and peace accords in Colombia and the Philippines, diplomacy works and is the only way to avert war. We cannot afford to wait.

CHRISTINE AHN
AIYOUNG CHOI

Ms. Ahn is the founder and executive director of Women Cross DMZ, and Ms. Choi is a member of the group’s executive committee.

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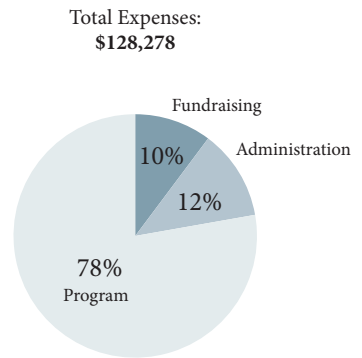
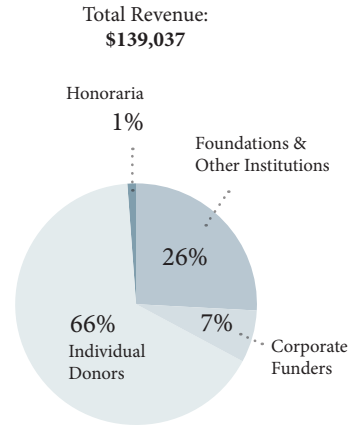
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Women Cross DMZ mobilizes women globally for peace in Korea. In 2015, on the 70th anniversary of Korea's division, WCDMZ led 30 women peacemakers across the De-Militarized Zone between North and South Korea. We held women's peace symposia in both Pyongyang and Seoul and walked with 10,000 Korean women on both sides of the DMZ. Our action drew global attention to the urgent need to end the Korean War with a peace treaty, reunite divided families, and ensure women's leadership in peacebuilding.

"WCDMZ has injected new energy and vision into the struggle to end the division on the Korean peninsula and promote peace and security. Since their dramatic crossing of the DMZ last year, these remarkable women have drawn unprecedented national and international attention to the "Forgotten" Korean War, the longest ongoing military conflict in U.S. history."

-Ramsay Liem, Professor Emeritus, Boston College



Photographs by: Christine Ahn, Coleen Baik, Margaret Gerhart, Hyukkyo Suh, Jacquelyn Wells, Ann Wright and Stephen Wunrow.
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